

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of The Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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EXCUSES Sinning Against the Holy Ghost

By EVANGELIST BILL RICE

"Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." (Luke 14:16-24).

A man had said to Jesus, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," and our Lord told him this remarkable story of a man who "made a great supper and bade many."

This story makes plain the fact that many who are invited will not accept God's invitation to Heaven. There are many who know Christ died for them and who realize they are invited to be saved but who make up some kind of excuse or other as to why they do not accept the invitation. And this story also makes it clear that all such excuses are not only stilly and unreasonable, but wicked and dangerous! The truth is that there is only one real reason — although one may make up a thousand excuses — why men and women, boys and girls reject Jesus Christ. Jesus told what that reason is when he said, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." If you are not a Christian, it's simply because you are not willing to be saved.

The first one had bought some land and just had to go and look at it. Remember, now, it was not a business matter for he had already bought it. It seems reasonable that if he had already bought the land, he could have waited until the morning to look at it, doesn't it? And the fact is he would have had to for how could he have looked at it after dark! Was he going to go around striking matches on the seat of his pants to

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Evangelist Bill Rice

By EVANGELIST JOE HENRY HANKINS

(Sermon preached Wednesday, September 22, 1943 at Wheaton College Chapel, Wheaton, Illinois. Stenographically recorded for The Sword of The Lord).

This morning we study "The Sins or Sinning Against the Holy Ghost." There are a number of such sins. When one speaks of sinning against the Holy Ghost, most people think of the unpardonable sin. But there are a number of sins mentioned in the Scripture as against the Holy Spirit which are not unpardonable sins but which deprive us as Christians of our joy, our power, our assurance, our ability to pray, our fruit bearing for the Lord and our spiritual growth and fellowship with the Lord. We read from the fifth chapter of Galatians, beginning with the sixteenth verse:

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

I pause to explain that word cannot. The word translated cannot is not the word that we usually use. When we say cannot, we mean it is impossible. The word here means it is very difficult. So we will read it this way: "so that it is difficult for you to do the things that ye would."

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

"Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred,

variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.

"Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. 5:16-26).

Now before we speak specifically about sinning against the Holy Spirit, let me give just this brief explanation of the work of the Holy Spirit; first, in the unbelieving heart to bring that unbelieving person to salvation. God seeks out the unbeliever by the Holy Spirit. God always makes the first move in salvation. You who have been saved are very conscious of that. Maybe suddenly once there came a realization in your heart that you were lost; there suddenly came a hungering in your heart for the Lord; there was a tug at your heart strings, a knock at your heart's door. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." In other words, God must begin the work in our hearts when we are lost, and God calls us unto Himself. The Holy Spirit seeks us out. The Holy Spirit produces the conviction of sin in the unsaved heart and a sense of need of a Saviour. Jesus said in the sixteenth chapter of John, verse 8, "When he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he



Dr. Joe Henry Hankins

will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Now that is the beginning, the ground work of salvation — the moving of the Spirit upon the unsaved heart to arouse him to his lost condition and his sense of need and to woo him and draw him unto the Christ. Then the Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and plants it in that unsaved heart. God tells us plainly in I Corinthians 2:14, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." No person could ever understand the way of salvation if the Holy Spirit did not open his understanding and enable him to know and see and understand the way of salvation. Then the Holy Spirit regenerates that heart and we are born of the Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit seals that regenerated heart in Christ. Ephesians 1:13, 14 say, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption..." So

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Christmas Questions -- Christian Answers

CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY? "CHRIST MASS?" A PAGAN HOLIDAY? ARE GIFTS PROPER? CHRISTMAS TREES? SANTA CLAUS? HOW CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

By EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

Many Christians have asked me questions about Christmas, and perhaps to answer those questions in the light of the Bible would be a blessing to others also.

1. Was Jesus Really Born on December 25th?

We do not know. The Bible does not say. The historical records do not say. He may have been born on that date but no one knows.

2. Should Protestants Celebrate a Roman Catholic Holiday, "Christ Mass?"

The name Christmas, "Christ mass" had a Catholic origin, but the birth of Christ does not belong to Catholics, nor is Christ theirs alone. The name is no reason why every Christian should not observe the day.

3. Some Say the Christmas and The Holiday Season Were Originally Used by Pagan People in Worship of Heathen Gods Which

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"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

— Matt. 2:1, 2.

Jan.--Nov.; 666 Saved Through Literature

By VIOLA WALDEN, Office Manager

This has been a very happy, prosperous and blessed year thus far for The Sword of The Lord Publishers. The first eleven months this year we have had the following books printed or reprinted: March 15 — 20,000 HELL: WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT IT March 26 — 23,000 BIBLE BAPTISM January, May and December — 1,063,899 WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? August 18 — 10,000 LODGES EXAMINED BY THE BIBLE August 27 — 10,141 WHEN SKELETONS COME OUT OF THEIR CLOSETS! September 13 — 5,040 THE SOUL-WINNER'S FIRE October 2 — 10,100 BIBLE LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION October 30 — 12,021 BIBLE FACTS ABOUT HEAVEN November — 15,000 TWELVE TREMENDOUS THEMES, (5-

000 paper, 10,000 cloth) November 22 — 10,000 RELIGIOUS BUT LOST November 22 — 20,233 CAN A SAVED PERSON EVER BE LOST? November — 5th edition reprinted by Zondervan Publishing House WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE DANCE? November — 10th edition reprinted by Zondervan Publishing House WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE MOVIES? December 4 — 10,000 SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IN DANIEL December — 20,000 PETTING AND THE SCARLET SIN December — 10,000 REBELLIOUS WIVES AND SLACKER HUSBANDS December — 10,000 SUNDAY OR SABBATH December — 20,000 TOBACCO: IS ITS USE A SIN?

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Christmas Questions — Christmas Answers

(Continued from page one)

Are no Gods. Should Christians Observe Such a Day?

All the days belong to God. Through Christ He made the worlds, and all the days are His. Some say it is wrong to worship Christ on Sunday, since that was the day, (they say) of sun-worship, but that is foolish. If a heathen man once worshipped idols on Sunday and now worships the true God on the same day, praise the Lord! If heathen people once had the new year festival or any other pagan celebration at the Christmas time, and now people honor Christ on the same day, that is proper. Some people think Christ was born on December 25th; the rest of us do not know when He was born, but we like to set aside a day to remember his birth and praise Him. We know no better day, so use December 25th.

A good many children are born every leap year on February 29th. Is it wrong for the loved ones to remember the child's birth on February 28th on other years, when there are only twenty-eight days in the month? Would it be wrong if a mother lost the record, and no one remembered the birthday of a child, to set aside a day to honor the birth of the child? If one did not know the proper birthday, would it not be proper to set aside a day for remembrance anyway? So we celebrate the birth of Christ on Christmas day, and I believe it honors Him.

4. Is it Proper to Give Gifts to Others on Christ's Birthday?

Certainly Christ should be first on Christmas. But then He wants and deserves first place on every other day, also! Giving should be the kind that honors Christ, and certainly we should give ourselves and all we have to Christ. But giving gifts to others is a proper way to honor the Lord, according to Bible example and teaching. Jews at the feast of Durim, a feast to the Lord celebrating the great deliverance God gave the Jews in answer to the prayers of Mordecai and Esther and other devout Jews, when wicked Haman planned to exterminate them, were taught "that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor" (Esther 9:22). When the Jewish remnant who returned from the captivity began to mourn on an holy day, when they met to hear the reading of the law, they were instructed to "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy unto our Lord" (Neh. 8:10). So they returned home for feasting and sending gifts. So giving gifts, if it be done in the right spirit and motive, honors God on special days set apart for Him.

Remember that God does not need anything we have in the way of material things, except as He wants them for people. So, under some circumstances giving to others may be as pleasing to God as giving to pastors and missionaries. We should take care to give in Jesus' name, and should remember specially the poor at Christmas. But the right kind of giving to others on Christmas is certainly fitting on Christmas. When the rich young ruler wanted to be perfect he was instructed to give his property to the poor, not to Jesus, (Matt. 19:21) and when Zachaeus was converted, he was led to say "the half of my goods I give to the poor," (Luke 19:8). That pleased Jesus very much. Jesus said that he would reward every one who gave a cup of cold water in His name. He also said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). So giving to others at Christmas must please Christ very much, if it be done in loving thought toward Him, and in His name. I think it fine to give to missions, to give to the poor, and also to give to loved ones and relatives at Christmas, if our motives be right.

5. Does the Scripture Anywhere Teach That to Have Christmas Trees Is Wrong?

No, it does not. Some have

thought Jeremiah 10:3, 4 refers to Christmas trees when it says, "For the customs of the people are vain; for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not." But a careful study of the context shows that it refers to the making of an idol, carved out of wood, covered with gold or silver and does not refer to a Christmas tree. As decorations, with sentimental value, the use of Christmas trees are not sinful. On the other hand, a so-called "worship center" with picture of Christ, a cross and candles is forbidden, and its use is idolatry, for God plainly commands us not to make graven images or any likenesses, for worship, and not to bow down to them, (Ex. 20:4, Num. 33:52). But Christmas trees are not used as "worship centers," and there is nothing to forbid their use in decoration.

6. Should Christians Tell Their Children There Is a Santa Claus?

Certainly not! Lying and deceit is a wicked sin. Lying on Christmas is as great a sin as lying on any other day. It is shameful beyond expression that Sunday Schools often choose to teach a lying fable at Christmas time, instead of teaching the marvelous true Christmas stories, about the Baby in the manger, the shepherds in the field, the angel's announcement of a Saviour born, the heavenly chorus, and the wise men from the east. The story of the virgin born Saviour is sweeter than any lie or fable invented by heathen people, and spread by non-Christians.

I remember the sad, sad day, when I, five years old, found that my father and mother and kin people had deceived me about Santa Claus, or Saint Nicolas. I was ashamed. I had been victimized. Those I trusted more than anybody else on earth, devout Christians, had lied. Perhaps other things they said were not true, too. Christmas was something of a mockery to me for years, until I began to learn the sweetness of a Christmas centered about the birth of Christ.

Lying is wicked, is plain forbidden in the bible, and is certain to have bad results. And the lie about Santa Claus is specially hurtful in that it crowds out interest in Christ Himself. The Lord Jesus, in many so-called Christian homes, is crowded out by the old fabled gentlemen always seen on Whiskey ads at this season of the year.

Parents should always tell the truth to their children. I believe that my own children have been happier about Christmas than any children who have known Christmas as the celebration of a lie by which mothers and fathers deceive their helpless little ones as long as they can. And now that some are in college they still delight in Christmas, in carols, in Christmas scriptures, in Christmas gifts, giving them as well as receiving them. And they know that they can trust their daddy and mother not to lie to them.

7. How May We Honor Christ At Christmas?

(a). Be sure to make much of the scriptures, specially the first two chapters of Matthew and the first two chapters of Luke. Memorize Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6, 7 and explain them to the children. The Bible truth about the birth of our Lord Jesus is wonderfully sweet. (b). Sing many Christmas carols, *Joy to the World, Silent Night, Oh Little Town of Bethlehem, Noel, Oh Come, All Ye Faithful*, etc. They are sound in doctrine, wonderfully sweet, and will enrich the lives for months and years ahead. (c). Make it a time of consecration, new surrender to God. The New Year approaches, the time for new resolutions. Lay all on the altar for God! (d). Make gifts to God's work; missions, soul-winning agencies. Make sure your gifts honor Christ and further the gospel. (e). Give to the poor. It is a crime to enjoy feasting and give expensive gifts to relatives and let poor people, sometimes the victims of mis-

Jan. — Nov.; 666 Saved Through Literature

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December — 20,000 THE BACKSLIDER

December — 20,000 VERBAL INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

December — 10,000 ALL HAVE SINNED

December — 9,900 PRAYER — ASKING AND RECEIVING,

a total of 1,329,334 books delivered to us, not counting the books reprinted by Zondervan Publishing House!

We believe our readers would also be interested in knowing that the subscription list has increased from 12,725 subscriptions on December 30, 1942, to 23,500 subscriptions on December 10th of this year. We believe it will run 25,000 before the end of the year. Many of the new subscriptions had not been added to the list when our printer sent to us the number of copies printed December 10th. This means that the subscription list has almost doubled this year!

During November we had reports of thirty-five who were saved through reading *The Sword of The Lord* literature, twenty-seven through the little booklet, *What Must I Do to Be Saved?*, one through the booklet on *Hell*, one through the sermon book, *When Skeletons Come Out of Their Closets*, two through Dr. Rice's article in *The Sword*, *Behold, The Man*, one through his article, *Prophecy Proves the Bible*, one through the article by Rev. R. Lofton Hudson, *What God Cannot Do*, and two did not say what booklets led them to trust Christ, but wrote that they were saved through this literature. This is an average of more than one a day in November.

Chaplain at U. S. Naval Training Station, San Diego, Writes

"Dear Doctor Rice:

"Many, many thanks for the 1-500 copies of *WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?* which you sent me in response to my letter of October 1st. I have given them out one by one with a personal word of introduction along this line: Here is the finest little booklet outside of the New Testament that I know anything about. It contains the answer to life's greatest question. Until you answer this question correctly you begin at no beginning and work toward no end. I discovered this little booklet over a year ago. I have read it some twenty times in the past year and have given out hundreds of them. I expect to read it as many more times in the coming year. Keep it. Read it over and over again. Share it with your shipmates. Until you have gotten Squared Away with Christ you are not ready to go out as a fighting man — you are floundering around in the dark and ugly waters of judgment. Make sure you are aboard the good ship Salvation!"

"By the 1st of December I will not have more than 100 copies on hand. I shall be deeply grateful to you if you will send me another 1,500 copies at your earliest convenience."

"Had seven professions of faith and baptism last Sabbath and one reprofession of faith. The Lord, as always, is richly blessing the preaching of The Word. It is truly 'The Sword of The Lord!'"

"Yours in His Unfailing Grace," (Signed) M. Dewitt Safford, Chaplain, U. S. Naval Reserve

Sergeant in Station Hospital Overseas Reads "What Must I Do to Be Saved," Writes of His Conversion

Some of the most blessed letters we received are from boys overseas. September 2nd we received a letter from a soldier in North Africa who had made the invasion on Sicily. He told how he was baptized in the Mediterranean Sea and

fortune, spend Christmas without enough to eat or without clothes enough to be warm. "Remember the poor," we are commanded. (Gal. 2:10). (f). Be sure to make your own loved ones happy, with loving attention and caresses and gifts, not necessarily expensive, but showing your love. (g). Watch carefully that you are not ensnared by the drink, the lust, the commercialism and worldliness in which so many sin at Christmas time.

told how glad he was to receive Dr. Rice's booklet on *The Soul Winner's Fire*. We feel that these boys in battle are deeply interested in their soul's salvation. So it rejoices our heart greatly to hear from them. On November 25th Sergeant Blood, somewhere in the Pacific, wrote out the decision slip which is found on page 23 of the booklet on *What Must I Do to Be Saved?* and sent it to us by V-Mail. He wrote:

"Dear Brother Rice:

"Realizing that I am a sinner and believing that Christ died for my sins, I here and now trust Him to be my personal Saviour, depending on Him to forgive my sins, change my heart, and give me everlasting life as He promised to do. I am glad to confess Him as my Saviour and gladly mail this to let you know."

"Pray for me."

(Signed) Sgt. Blood.

We trust our readers will pray for this boy who is in a station hospital, perhaps wounded in battle. Pray that he may grow in grace, and win others to Christ through his testimony.

"Six in Our Family and There Wasn't Even One That Was Saved Until I Read That Lovely Book..."

Saturday night, November 6, a young woman from Old Fort, North Carolina, wrote Dr. Rice a very fine letter, telling of her conversion. Part of her letter is as follows:

"Dear Brother Rice:

"Thank God for your little booklet, *What Must I Do to Be Saved?* It is a wonderful little booklet and I can never praise God enough for it. A friend of mine gave it to me at work one day this week but I just hadn't taken any interest in it. But tonight I was so alone in feeling that I couldn't hardly stand it so I thought of what I'd heard so many times about what a wonderful feeling it was to read God's Word. So I went and got that little book and I'm certainly thankful I did for I already feel one hundred per cent better. I feel happy and gay now. I feel as if I've truly been forgiven for all of my sins. Oh, I just know I have! Oh, how happy I feel! You know how it is for I just simply can't explain it."

She tells of having a boy friend in the army unsaved, and then she says, "Six in our family and there wasn't even one that was saved until I read that lovely book and now I'm going to pray for them and ask everyone I know that will pray for them."

"Well, it's getting late so I guess I'd better close now in Christ's name and for our sake. Don't you know that the angels in heaven are rejoicing in heaven tonight over my salvation? I'm asking you to pray for me that I may stand all the trials and temptations of life and pray for those on my prayer list."

"Yours in Christ,"

(Signed) Betty Smith.

Evangelist Tells of Conversion of Soldier

Evangelist Wm. T. Wiggings of Darby, Pennsylvania, wrote us November 9th, asking us to renew his subscription and then said,

"I might say that a soldier boy at Fort Dix, New Jersey, in the Morning Cheer Center, had taken Mr. Rice's tract, *What Must I Do to Be Saved* from our tract rack, read it in his barracks, came back to the Center the next day under deep conviction, and we led him to Christ. Praise the Lord for Mr. Rice's tracts!"

From Irvona, Pennsylvania, a woman writes:

"Will you please send me two or more of your booklets, *What Must I Do to Be Saved?* My sister and I have had great consolation in reading this little booklet. We are old and felt we were not worthy of God's love, but believe he is ready and willing to save every one who puts their trust in Him. Thank you very much."

She sent the decision slip from the booklet. How glad we were to have this letter!

A letter came in November from Miss Fern Denman of Green For-

est, Arkansas, to whom we had sent 500 booklets to be used in classes in high school. She says "I now have six classes, with seventy enrolled. One young man, soon to go to the army, read the tract and was persuaded in his heart to believe in Christ and today gave a public testimony of it. Others have been blessed and helped in the reading of this tract and we wanted you to know how God is using it here. We gave one to each home represented in the schools and to each teacher. Last week one teacher admitted she wasn't saved and was greatly stirred and I believe she will soon be saved. She took one of the booklets. Several children have confessed Christ in our schools. One high school girl did today. Praise God!"

"One of your booklets entitled *What Must I Do to Be Saved?* came to my hands. I passed it on to someone who came and visited me for a few minutes, and he said that he would read it. This was on Friday. The next Tuesday the same person dropped dead. I have a feeling that the Lord answered prayer, and that he read, believed, and was saved..."

(Signed) Mrs. Carroll V. Findley.

If you can prayerfully use the booklet, *What Must I Do to Be Saved?*, giving copies only to those who promise to read them, then write us and we will be happy to send them to you.

Notice that we do not send free copies, indiscriminately, for you to mail or hand out any way you want to do, as you do some cheaper tracts. Do not ask for free copies, unless you promise to give them only to people who agree to read them, or to people who take them voluntarily from tract racks, etc. They cost a penny a copy, but as long as we are assured they will be used as we say, we gladly send them free in any amounts. Write us at 145 N. Hale Street, Wheaton, Illinois.

The following gifts designated for use on gospel literature during November.

November Gifts

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Pressler, Indiana.....	\$3.00
Maude Russell, Texas.....	4.00
Berwald Kennedy, Illi.....	1.00
T. Johnston, Iowa.....	5.00
Miss Ethel Rowland, Ill.....	2.50
Wm. Schlatter, Iowa.....	.75
Mrs. Scott Leverette, Ok.....	.50
Mrs. John Scott, Iowa.....	.25
Ed Haaby, N. Dakota.....	1.50
Martha Taylor, Texas.....	1.00
P. W. Krockner, Kansas.....	1.50
Mrs. Leonard Stirn, Kansas.....	1.00
Bert Adams, Washington.....	3.00
Mr. E. Eastman, S. Dakota.....	3.00
Frank Epps, Iowa.....	.50
Mrs. Ray Wright, Ill.....	1.00
Mrs. W. W. Leonard, N. Jersey.....	2.00
Mrs. Chas. DeHaven, Ind.....	4.00
J. S. Spangler, Iowa.....	.40
Wm. H. Walter, Mo.....	26.40
Mrs. J. R. Smith, Kansas.....	1.05
Mrs. Carol V. Findley, Mass.....	1.00
Lt. Cora Miller, Wisc.....	5.00
Alma Anderson, Illinois.....	5.00
Mrs. Mattie Ericson, S. Dakota.....	2.00
Mrs. Harold Rusche, Wisc.....	2.00
Lucile Wallen, Neb.....	5.00
Mrs. Hattie Doggett, Kan.....	1.00
Edwin Paul Johnson, Ind.....	10.00
Lottie Boyd, Oklahoma.....	3.00
Mr. and Mrs. Ray Barnett, Ark.....	1.00
Mrs. Eva Armitage, Kan.....	2.00
Mrs. Arthur W. Roper, Col.....	1.00
Mrs. C. S. Striplin, Texas.....	2.00
Hazel Fulton, Nebraska.....	1.00
Mrs. Elmer Shacklette, Col.....	.50
Mrs. Oscar Harshman, Ill.....	1.00
A Friend.....	1.00
Mrs. R. E. Tucker, Wisc.....	5.00

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THE SWORD OF THE LORD

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EXCUSES

(Continued from page one)

see by! No sir! He was just a plain liar! He didn't intend to go and see that land

I. THE WICKEDNESS OF EXCUSES

Notice the wickedness of these three men who "with one consent began to make excuse."

Liar Number One

The first one had bought some land and just had to go and look at it. Remember, now, it was not a business matter for he had already bought it. It seems reasonable to believe that if he had already bought the land, he could have waited until the morning to look at it, doesn't it? And the fact is he would have had to for how could he have looked at it after dark! Was he going to go around striking matches on the seat of his pants to see by! No sir! He was just a plain liar! He didn't intend to go and see that land any more than a jackrabbit! He just didn't want to go to the supper and gave the first excuse that entered his head.

Liar Number Two

The second one said he had bought "five yoke of oxen" and had to go try them out — that is, break them to work if need be. Now, some folks might believe a tale like that, but not a boy from the cattle country of Texas! I have never in my life tried to break a steer to work but I have worked with enough of them — de-horning, branding, loading, etc. — to know that no man with any sense wants to fool with wild steers after dark. And as for training ten of them in one night — *Superman himself couldn't do it!* He simply didn't want to go to the supper and lied out of it.

Liar Number Three

And notice what the third one said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come!" He didn't even ask to be excused — just said he couldn't make it because he was married! But why couldn't he? According to my wife, if a girl wants to go anywhere after she is married she better hurry up about it while she still has the nice clothes her father bought her! And usually young married folks are so happy and proud of each other that they want to meet one another's friends and want everyone to know that they are married. Certainly there is no reason why this young man could not have gone to the supper if he had wanted to do so. The plain fact is that he did not want to go and so he made up an excuse. He lied about it.

And, folks, the ONE real reason why anyone rejects Jesus Christ is because he does not want to be saved. Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me." If you are not saved, it is because you are not willing to be saved, you do not want to be saved. And the one real reason Christians do not serve the Lord wholeheartedly is that they do not want to do so. And let every lukewarm or backslidden Christian who reads this realize that whatever excuse you may give for not serving the Lord, you are as inexcusable as

The Fat Woman in Indiana

who said she could not come to the revival meeting. The pastor and I called on her but she told us in a whining voice she simply could not come because she was a "trifle stout" and could not stand the heat. We explained that the church building in the evening was the coolest place in town because of the electric fans we had installed. But she went on to say that she had a bad heart and could not stand excitement and was afraid she would faint if anyone were saved since it would make her so happy! She also reminded us that it was one-half mile from her home to the church and she was a "nervous wreck" after riding that far in the car. We left. Well, the next day just after dinner — and it was one of the hottest days of the summer — we heard the fire siren and someone behind the parsonage yelled "FIRE! FIRE!" It was a Chevrolet

car burning right behind the church and it seemed that within fifteen minutes every person in town — men, women, children and dogs — was there. A fire in that little town was a rare thing and they were making the most of it. The fire truck came but it wouldn't work and the situation became really exciting for it looked as though the gas tank might explode. The firemen pushed the crowd back into the street and I was wiping the sweat from my blistering face when I saw a large woman running down the road towards us. Her hair was streaming out behind her, her skirts were flying to the winds, and her mule-clad feet were moving up and down on that gravel road like a couple of well greased Ford pistons! It was the woman who couldn't come to the meetings because of the heat, excitement, and long distance to ride! But none of these things kept her from rushing half-a-mile on foot in the burning noon-day heat to join a howling mob at a fire!

Her excuses were just plain lies, like the

Country Church Deacon in Michigan

who said it was too cold to try to build a church for the revival services. The lumber was already sawed and on the grounds, but when I suggested that we ought to put the building up, he said I should not expect men to freeze their hands putting up a church building in such weather. He was cross about it and I dropped the subject.

A few days later we heard he was sick with a cold and went to pray with him. We found him in bed with hot water bottles on his feet and asked him how he caught the cold. He didn't say but his wife did. She told us he had gone duck hunting and had fallen in the icy water! Well, I made a few well-mannered remarks about hypocrites who said it was too cold to work on God's church house but thought nothing of lying around on their bellies all day trying to bag a mess of ducks and a little later he got out of bed and pulled on his britches and joined the men who were working on the building and we got it up in time for the revival.

Christian friend, take this to heart, there is no honest excuse for your not serving the Lord.

You may excuse yourself on the grounds that the weather is too hot or too cold but if it isn't too bad to work, visit, or play, then it isn't too bad to serve the Lord.

You may excuse yourself for not teaching in Sunday School when the truth is you are too lazy to do the work and simply do not want to do it.

You may excuse yourself from tithing on the ground that you cannot afford to tithe when the truth is you are greedy and selfish and do not love the Lord enough to give one tenth of your income.

You may excuse yourself for not praying and reading the Bible on the grounds that you are too busy and do not have the time when the truth is there is nothing else so worthy of your time. And you probably spend enough time reading the funny papers and listening to Ma Perkins on the radio to have read your Bible through time and again and to have prayed for all the heathen in China!

Excuses, good neighbor, are just dressed-up lies and you ought to put them aside, confess your sins to the Lord, and ask Him to use you in His blessed work. Remember, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If you are not trying with all your heart to serve the Lord, by all means begin to do so now.

Excuses For Rejecting Christ

If you are not yet a Christian, you probably have some excuse as to why you are not. But whatever the excuse you may give, the real reason you are unsaved is that you do not want to be saved. You are not willing to turn from your sins to the Saviour.

Perhaps you say you are not saved because there are

Too Many Hypocrites in the Church

But let me remind you that Romans 14:12 says, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Your first consideration is not whether or not John Doe is a Christian but whether or not you are. Are you going to go to Hell because someone else claims to love the Lord but is lying about it? You are not lost because John Doe is a hypocrite, but because you yourself are not willing to be saved.

Or perhaps your excuse is that you are

Better Than Most Church Members

And that may be true, but no church member is saved through his own goodness. They, too, are sinners who must be saved through Christ. So do not feel that you are justified in rejecting Christ just because you are as good as some church member. Jesus plainly warned against your comparing yourself with others when he said, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." All of us, no matter how good, need salvation, and every Christ-rejector is lost no matter what excuse he may give.

It may be you say that you

Do Not "Feel" Like Being Saved

But there is no special emotional "feeling" a man must have to be saved. You know you can be saved and that you ought to be saved. What more "feeling" do you want? Jesus did not say, "Ye cannot come unto me because you do not 'feel' like it," but rather, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." You do not need to "feel" something but to do something. You need to accept Christ.

There are many other excuses you may give. You may say that there is "too much to give up," or that you "aren't ready yet," or are "afraid you can't hold out," or that your "friends might object" or any one of a thousand excuses. But let me remind you again in all sincerity that there is only one real reason why you are not saved and that is because you are not willing to be.

II. THE DANGER OF MAKING EXCUSES

Excuse making is dangerous for the Bible says that the Master of the house, "being angry," said, "none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper!" Any excuse that isn't good enough to keep you out of Hell isn't good enough to hang on to. Unless your excuse for rejecting Christ is one that God will accept, you ought to drop it and turn to the Saviour who died for you. And you ought to do it right this minute.

III. The Inviting Lord

Although those who made wicked, lying excuses never did get any of the supper, the Lord sent His servant into the highways and hedges to invite others. The servant sought out the needy; the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind and invited them to come. All were invited and only those stayed away who were not willing to come. And so the Lord invites sinners today to come to Him for salvation. Sinner, you are invited to come, the invitation is for everyone and it is for you. God's Holy Spirit has spoken to your heart time and again, inviting you to come and be saved.

J. Wilbur Chapman, the great evangelist, used to tell the story of a willful girl who ran away from her widowed mother. The girl went to the big city and soon became a fallen girl. The mother loved her dearly but did not know how to get in touch with her to invite her to come back home. When Chapman heard the story, he had a number of large placards made with the little gray-haired mother's picture on them and two words in red ink beneath the picture which said, "Come Home."

Mr. Chapman then went to the big city and put these large placards in the gambling joints, liquor dens, and houses of prostitution with the prayer and hope

SINNING AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

(Continued from page one)

we are sealed by the Spirit. Also the Holy Spirit moves into the saved heart to take up His abode there. We become temples of the Holy Spirit. He lives in the saved heart.

Now the purpose of his indwelling presence is to guide us, to teach us, to lead us out into service and to bear the fruit of the

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that this girl would see one of them. And she did! The poor girl, in a house of ill-fame, saw the picture of her mother and read the crimson words, "Come Home" and knew it was meant for her. With a grateful heart she went back to the mother who loved her and forgave her and invited her to come home.

Good neighbor, God loves you. He has longed for you to turn from your sins and come to Him. He loved you enough that He sent you His Likeness, His only begotten Son whose crimson blood has written for you the invitation, "Come."

Don't you feel it is time you accepted Christ? Haven't you put it off long enough? In Jesus' name, we earnestly invite you to accept Jesus Christ right now and be saved.

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

If you have not heretofore accepted Christ as your own Saviour, and now will, won't you please sign the following statement and mail it to Dr. John R. Rice, 145 N. Hale St., Wheaton, Illinois.

Dear Brother Rice:

I have read the sermon on "Excuses" and have been reminded again that God loves me, Christ died for me, and I have been invited to "eat bread in the kingdom of God."

I am willing to accept that invitation and therefore I here and now receive Jesus Christ as my Saviour, trusting Him to forgive my sins, give me a new heart, and to take me to Heaven.

Sincerely yours,

Signed.....

Address.....

Spirit in our hearts, to make us happy in the Lord, to give us power, to give spiritual understanding and to give us the assurance of our salvation, to bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. We are especially dependent upon the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit for the assurance of our salvation. Now as we go along you will see why so many Christian people get to the place where doubts come in and why they even get to the place where they do not know whether they are saved or not. They have lost the assurance of their salvation and are groping in the darkness; they have lost the joy of their salvation; they have lost their first love and they have lost the power to pray. We are dependent upon the Holy Spirit for that warm glow of the first love that we experienced when we first found the Lord. The Scripture says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." We are dependent, upon Him, as I said, for the assurance of our salvation, the joy of salvation and that first love. The fruit of the Spirit is love (there it is right at the head of the list); the fruit of the Spirit is love; second, joy, third, peace, and long suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, oh, our faith is so weak. How we wish we might have stronger faith! It is the fruit of the Spirit. Then not only faith, but self-control is another. That is the fruit of the Spirit in the saved heart and life. Now, what are some of the sins against the Holy Spirit?

(Continued on page four)

11 Best of John R. Rice's



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SINNING AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

(Continued from page three)

I. Grieving the Spirit.

In Ephesians the fourth chapter, verse 30 Paul said, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Grieving the Holy Spirit is one of the most common of the sins of the children of God against this indwelling divine Person. Yes, the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is not an it. The Holy Spirit is not a mere influence. He is a Person; just as truly a Person as Jesus Christ is a Person, just as much as God the Father. The Godhead consists of three Persons. God is a Trinity, three Persons, yet all merging into One that we call the Godhead. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit each has a distinct and separate work in the matter of salvation and in the spiritual life and growth and fruitfulness of the Christian. The Holy Spirit's great work is in the fruitfulness and in the spiritual growth and development of the child of God. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

"How do we grieve the Holy Spirit? Remember I said that the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode in the saved heart. There He lives. And so we hear Paul say in the verse just preceding the one I have just read, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." This literally means, "Let no filthy conversation proceed out of your mouth." The Holy Spirit is living in me, a child of God, and He must listen in on every conversation. The Holy Spirit is the most sensitive Person to sin in all the universe; infinitely more sensitive to sin than the holiest, sweetest saint that ever lived on this earth; more sensitive to sin than the holiest, purest, sweetest, most godly and saintly mother that ever lived. "Let no filthy conversation proceed out of your mouth." For such grieves the Holy Spirit who indwells you.

Then again; not only are we warned against filthy conversation but in this same book of Ephesians, in the fifth chapter and the fourth verse we read, "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting. . . Oh, how careful a child of God ought to be about his conversation! So many Christian people are so careless here. I have heard Christian people, and even preachers of the gospel tell some of the filthiest, smuttiest stories I have ever heard. "Let no filthy conversation proceed out of your mouth." It grieves the Holy Spirit. And let no foolish talking, no filthiness of any kind, no jesting proceed out of your mouth. Be careful, child of God, about your conversation. You cannot be too careful nor too chaste in your conversation. I think that more Christian people, perhaps, are robbing themselves of the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives by grieving Him with their careless conversation and foolish jesting, to say nothing of the filthy conversation that proceeds out of many mouths, than any other one thing. I know many professing Christians, I say it without a spirit of criticism, but I know many Christian people who have veritably made a sewer out of their mouths. No wonder they do not have any power. No wonder they cannot pray. No prayer is ever answered unless it is prayed in the Spirit, and nobody who is grieving the Spirit of God can pray in the Spirit. I am trying to give you something practical this morning. Perhaps you have asked yourself, "Why do I find it impossible to pray? Why do my words, when I pray, seem to come back and mock me with their hollowness? I am so conscious that I get nowhere with God when I try to

pray." Oh, young people, most likely it is because you have been grieving the Holy Spirit.

Listen again. Our attitudes especially the attitudes of our heart toward others may grieve the Holy Spirit. "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." If there is an unforgiving spirit in your heart or if there is malice or ill-will or hard feelings that you carry around in your heart against somebody else, get it out for it is grieving the Holy Spirit and it will rob you of your joy, peace, assurance, power to pray and fruitfulness as a child of God. Not only that but "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking"—it comes back again to the matter of speaking—"Let all be put away from you, with all malice." For those things grieve the Spirit of God.

A young lady said to me the other night, "I want to know how to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit." One of the things you must know is that certain things grieve the Holy Spirit of God and nobody can have the infilling of the Holy Spirit and at the same time grieve the Holy Spirit by your attitude, by your conversation, or by sin in your life.

Another thing that grieves the Spirit of God is the places we go. Many times a child of God goes into places and into groups where the atmosphere is not at all what would please the Holy Spirit or be conducive to the Spirit's manifestation of Himself and the power of the Spirit in his life. You cannot be too careful about where you go. There is a price to pay for a real spiritual life. There is a price to pay for a prayer life. Let me stop here and say this, any price you have to pay, young people, you will find that in the joy of the fullness of the Spirit of God, His constant presence, His witness in your heart, the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control that He bears — when you are in possession of that, you will realize that the price you paid was well worth while. It is worth any price you have to pay to be able to walk with God, to talk with God, to pray and know that your prayers are going to be answered, and to have the constant joy and assurance of salvation.

Now again I say the places I go — the Holy Spirit must go with me everywhere I go. The reason that I do not go to picture shows is because I have never seen one where I felt like the atmosphere in such places would be conducive and pleasing to the Holy Spirit. Have you? Go into one of them. There on the screen you see what? — a veritable orgy or lust, murder, crime and everything that would be displeasing and would grieve the Holy Spirit. Yet a lot of Christians say, "I cannot see any harm in that." I will tell you why they can't: They are not spiritual Christians, not Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. Do you want to be just an ordinary Christian, just a nominal Christian? Do you know what a nominal Christian is? A Christian in name only. Have you an ambition to walk with the Lord. Have you an ambition in your heart, a hungering in your soul to know more of the power of the Spirit and more power in prayer? When people pray in the Spirit God Almighty says, "Ask anything and it will be done for you." God throws the gate of Heaven wide open to people who can really pray. Do you want the kind that Enoch had when he walked with the Lord? The devil has told us that we will be happier to follow him, to let down our standards. "Do not be narrow and fanatic; be broad." We have listened to the devil and he has cheated us out of the greatest blessing, the deepest joy, the sweetest peace, the most wonderful life possible for human beings, on this earth. If I believe there is a God, and I do, and I know Him as a child, then don't I know God's way, not my way, will be best? Don't I know if I follow Him, that life will be sweeter, deeper, richer, happier, more glorious than it could be any other way in the world? Surely anybody can realize that. Quit grieving the Spirit because of the places you go.

I see Christian people go to

dances. They see no harm in it. Can you imagine the Holy Spirit at home there with the sensuous jazz music, with young women and young men in each other's arms and whirling on the dance floor? No wonder so many Christians do not have peace. No wonder so many are groping in the dark. No wonder so many Christians have lost their assurance. They have grieved the Holy Spirit of God by where they have gone.

Somebody says, "I just cannot see any harm in a social game of bridge." That thing you hold in your hand — a deck of playing cards — that is the devil's Bible, the devil's favorite instrument and the favorite instrument of the gambler, drunkard, and criminal. Go into the jails and penitentiaries and you will find everyone with a deck of cards. Go into the lowest dives on the face of the earth, the underworld — every brothel, every haunt of the underworld has a deck of cards. I say it is the devil's favorite instrument. Oh, it grieves the Holy Spirit and robs us of our power, our joy as a Christian, our peace, our assurance and our fruitfulness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Quenching the Spirit

There is another sin against the Holy Spirit. I want to mention. In I Thessalonians 5:19 we find, "Quench not the Spirit." The Spirit, indwelling the heart of the believer, moves upon his heart and mind and impresses him especially in two respects: one is to urge him to service, and impress him to do certain things; the other is to warn him against certain things he may be about to do or a course he is about to take which is displeasing to God. What child of God hasn't felt very definite impressions from the Spirit to speak to certain persons about their souls, or to undertake a certain service for the Lord? God's Word teaches that we may be and ought to be continually led thus by the Spirit. If we won't quench the Spirit, but yield to and follow His leadership, we will be led of Him to the glory of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is also on the job to warn us against sin and pitfalls of the devil. Don't you remember when you were first saved how something gripped your heart, how something all of a sudden got hold of your heart and tried to stop you when you were about to go wrong? There was a voice just hammering away at your conscience. There was a pull at your heart string. There was as it were a red light swinging across your path like the light at the railroad crossing that warns you of the approaching train. What was that? The Holy Spirit trying to warn you against the dangers of your course. You ignored it, went on and over-rode that warning, that urging, that prompting of the Spirit of God. If you continue such a course, soon you cannot hear His warnings. After awhile you can't see any harm in anything. The saddest thing in the world is when Christians have lost their power to discriminate between right and wrong. That is what you do when you quench the Spirit, when you turn a deaf ear as He tries to warn you, prompt you, urge you against that thing and tries to lead you the other way 'round. You get to where after awhile nothing seems very bad. You have lost your power to discriminate between right and wrong. This is the saddest thing that could happen to a child of God. The prophet Isaiah said, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" What does he mean? God means it is a sad day in the life of a child of God when he has lost his power of discrimination between what is right and what is wrong. These are they who say, "I can't see any harm in this," "I don't see any harm in the dance," "I can't see any harm in card-playing, smoking, using tobacco." "I can't see any harm in taking a little drink." I tell you, it is an awful tragedy to get to that place in your life as a child of God. But that is what happens if you continually quench the Spirit of God.

III. The Sin Unto Death.

Then there is another sin I want to mention. I John 5:16, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that

he shall pray for it." That is an unsaved person He is talking to there. Listen quietly and prayerfully each unsaved person that is here. Jesus said in John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "Draw him!" Oh, that strange feeling that takes hold of our heart strings when the gospel is preached, when you wake up sometimes in the wee small hours of the night and there is a strange feeling gripping your heart, and something seems to tell you that you ought to get right with God, that the way you are going is the way of destruction and that you ought to forsake this way and trust the Lord, that you ought to be a Christian. How many times has that knock come at your door! That is the most sacred hour, the most crucial hour that ever came to an unsaved heart, when that knock comes at your door, when that call of the Holy Spirit comes. For you will never be saved without it. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

God teaches in His Word that an unsaved person can resist the Spirit of God and drive Him away. Listen to Genesis 6:3, "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh." God says there will come a time when He will quit. Listen to Hosea 4:17, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Can you imagine God speaking like that? "Let him alone." Here is a man who is married to sin, loves it, is determined he shall have it; loves his drink, loves lustful indulgence, loves to satisfy his lower nature and gives himself to it, "Let him alone!"

Three times in the first chapter of the book of Romans, verses 24, 26 and 28 God uses language like this, "God gave them up!" "God gave them up!" The first time was because they didn't follow the light they had and deliberately turned away from God. The second statement in verse 26 was because they loved the created things more than they did the Creator. Multiplied thousands of people, in order to get a little bit of this world's goods, a few things of this world, shut God out of their life and God says when that happens, when men turn away from the God who created them, then God gives them up. The third case was indulging of the lower nature. And because of this awful sin in their lives they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, didn't like to think about God, "God gave them up!" "If you have just as your God, all right, you can have it," God says. And God gives them up and turns them over to the devil. How many times my unsaved friend has there been that strange tug at your heart string! How many times has there been that still Small Voice there trying to turn you around for God! How many times has there been a whispering in your soul, telling you that you are in need of a Saviour, and calling you tenderly, lovingly, knocking gently at the door of that heart! God says, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." There will come a time when God will say, "Let him alone!" You have resisted the Holy Spirit of God, you have insulted the Spirit of God and God says "Let him alone."

In Hebrews 10:26 we read, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." "If we sin wilfully after we have come to the knowledge of the truth, after the Holy Spirit has opened the understanding, after He has knocked at the heart's door and called and drawn us to salvation and has aroused our mind and heart to a sense of a need of a Saviour, has opened our understanding to see the way of salvation in Christ and then we deliberately, wilfully go away into sin, "there remains no more sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Then what did He say? That person has "trampled under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." Then Paul says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

I repeat, the crisis of your life,

the most crucial moment you ever face this side of eternity is when the Spirit calls at your heart's door and that gentle, loving, knocking and wooing draws you unto salvation. Don't turn Him away.

In Childress, Texas, Clyde — a seventeen year old high school lad sat in services one night. He was in the balcony. He sat near the rail and leaned over and listened intently. I saw him as the Holy Spirit gripped his heart and as he wiped great beads of perspiration from his brow. I saw him as we stood for the invitation. As we sang Clyde gripped the balcony rail and trembled like a leaf in the wind. I saw him stand there and saw his face turn pale as he looked at me. I kept motioning to him. I knew the Spirit of God was calling. I said, "Come! Come on!" Many times during that invitation I saw him start and then draw back and shake his head. After awhile I saw him step into the aisle. I called, "Come on!" I saw him step back. I kept calling. He stood there and trembled. I kept calling for him to come. I saw him shake his head and start down the steps of the balcony, but out the front door he went and ran out into the dark. Three weeks later I went to the home of Clyde who then had leucemia, that awful blood disease for which there is no cure. It enlarges the spleen and sometimes the abdomen distends twice its normal size. The red blood corpuscles cease to be replenished and death gradually, slowly inch by inch comes. I went in there that morning and sat by his bed side and tried to lead him to Christ. Finally he said, "Brother Hankins, I appreciate your coming, but I had my last call three weeks ago Sunday night. You saw me. You kept urging me to come. You knew what was taking place in my heart, didn't you?" I said, "Yes, I did." He said, "I started to come once. I just felt like I would have to come. I gripped the balcony rail but when I started — you saw me step out in the aisle — the devil whispered, 'Clyde, you are the leader of the high school dancing crowd. You are the most popular young man in the high school. Are you going to give it up?' So I stepped back and shook my head and said, 'I will go to Hell before I will do it.' And that is why I walked out. I want to tell you, something in here (pointing to his heart) died and you need not talk to me about being a Christian. My heart is as cold, as dead as a stone."

I thought maybe he didn't know he would not get well. I said, "Clyde, has the doctor told you what the trouble is?"

"Yes," he said, "He was here this morning and told me I had only three or four more days to live."

I got on my knees beside that bed and I read out of God's Word the plan of salvation and if ever I prayed in my life for a young man, that God would give him another chance, I prayed then. When I got up off my knees, he said, "Thank you, Brother Hankins, but I have had my chance. I can't! I can't! Something died in here." And that young man died without God.

You can't trifle with the Spirit of God. He is too sensitive to sin. Don't quench the Spirit. Don't grieve the Spirit. Don't resist the Spirit. When God's Spirit speaks, do it. Do it! When the Spirit of God speaks, don't say no! Bow your heads.

I wonder this morning if God hasn't shown some of you young people your need. Oh, how I have been in prayer to God about this message. I prayed last night to know what God wanted me to speak on this morning, and I know this is what He wanted. This message has been for some of you. I wonder if God hasn't shown some of you where you have failed; why your prayers have not been answered; why you haven't had peace, joy, assurance and the power of the Spirit; why you haven't had a burden for lost souls. When the Spirit is grieved, He can't work; you cannot bear fruit, you do not have any faith, or power. Oh, young people, how I covet for you a Spirit-filled and a Spirit-led life — a life glorious and happy and fruitful and sweet and deep and rich beyond words to describe. Has God shown you this morning what the trouble is? How I pray that He has! (About 400 hands lifted for prayer).

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